



The Prior family came to Duxbury with the first settlers and for a long time lived south of the meeting house and the burying ground. Then Benjamin Prior went north of the meeting house and bought a farm that stretched up along the old "path from the meeting house to the mill," along what is now Depot St. and it went west as far as Tremont St.

There was a small house on the property, too old and too small to be of much use to Benjamin who had a wife and 4 children then and 7 more in almost as many years. He was a prosperous tanner with a tannery works on Morton's Hole Creek, well able to afford a good house, and shortly after he got the farm he build a big 2-storied house in the center of the fields. Five generations of Priors lived in the house, adding an ell, making some improvements, but never changing the fine original outline and features of the farmhouse.

There are 2 front parlors, one either side of the small front entry with its narrow stairway, and to the rear the old kitchen flanked by burning room and buttry. The huge fireplace with its brick oven is still there, reminding one of the many years when Prior housewives did all their cooking in it. The old well is just a step from the door where many a pail of water was hauled up for the family needs.

There are several indications of age - the raised frame construction, wide boards, thicker than one sees today, and showing the marks of the old up and down say, many fireplaces - but 2 old features are particularly distinctive and unusual. The windows are narrow, nine panes over nine, set in old frames that had no pulleys or fasteners. The front door is perhaps the most interesting of all the old parts of the house. It is narrow, very narrow, and made of 2 vertical parts, each about 18 in. wide, opening out from the center, a most unusual door. I know of none other so narrow. There was no lock and key, but about half way up the lower part of the doorframe are signs of the brackets that held a bar across to keep the door closed.

In 1885 Henry A. Fish bought this house and lived in it over 40 years. He was so much a part of the town and his historic research so wide that for many this has been known as the Fish Place. With all his work on Duxbury history Mr. Fish never interested himself in the history of his own farm. Strange.

The acreage has dwindled from 50 acres to 12, but that is enough to keep the farm picture, with the house there in the fields, jut as Benjamin Prior built it in 1732. It is still the Prior Farmhouse, but now the home of George and Charlotte Richards.